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## ONONDAGA TALES.

GRANDMOTHER O-NE-HA-TAH, MOTHER OO-KWA-E, AND THE LOST BOY.

I HAD this story of the Lost Boy from the Rev. Albert Cusick, a native Onondaga, and the first part is very nearly as he wrote it out. The latter part he told me, and I took it down.

A long time ago, among the Onondaga Indians, were several families who went off to camp near the wildwood streams, where fish, deer, bear, otter, beaver, and other like game could be caught for winter use. These Onondagas, or People of the Hill, journeyed several days, and finally came to the hunting-grounds. The hunting-ground where they stopped was a very beautiful place, with its little hills and the river with high banks. Not far from their camp was a beautiful lake, with high rocky banks, and with little islands full of cedar-trees. When they came there it was in the moon or month of *Chut-ho-wa-ah*, or October. Some of these Indians made their camps near the river, and some near the lake. As it was quite early in the season for hunting, some of the Indians amused themselves by making birch-bark canoes. With these they could go up and down the river and on the lakes, fishing and trapping, or making deadfalls for smaller game.

In the party were five little boys, who had their own bows and arrows, and would go hunting, imitating their fathers and uncles. Among them was one much smaller than the rest, who was greatly teased by the older boys. Sometimes they would run away from him and hide themselves in the woods, leaving him crying; then they would come back and show themselves, and have a great laugh over the little boy's distress. Sometimes they would run for the camp, and would tell him that a bear or a wolf was chasing them, leaving the little boy far behind, crying with all his might. Many a time he sought his father's camp alone, when the other boys would leave him and hide themselves in the woods.

One day these little Indians found a great hollow log lying on the ground. One of them said, "Maybe there is a *Ta-hone-tah-na-ken* [rabbit] or a *Hi-sen* [red squirrel] in this hollow log. Let us shoot into it, and see if there is any *Ta-hone-tah-na-ken* in it." All agreed to this, and they began to take the little boy's arrows from him and shoot them into the hole; then the larger boys said to him, "Now go into the hollow log, and get your arrows." The little boy said, "No; I am afraid something might catch me." Then he began to cry, and was not at all willing to go into the log. The others coaxed him to do so, and one said he would get his uncle to make him a

new bow and arrows if he would go into the hollow log, and get the arrows they had shot there. At last this tempted the little boy. He stopped crying, got down on his hands and knees, and crawled into the log. When he had gone in a little way, he found one of his arrows, and handed it out. This gave him courage to go in a little farther. When he had advanced some distance in the log, one of the larger boys said, "Let's stop up the log, and trap that boy in it, so that he can't get out." This was soon agreed to, and the boys began to fetch old rotten wood and old limbs, stopping up the hollow, and trapping the little boy in it. When this mischief was done, the four boys ran to their camp, not saying a word about the little boy who was trapped in the log.

It was two days before the mother<sup>1</sup> and father began to notice the absence of their boy, for they thought he must have stayed over night with one of the others, as very often he had done; but the second day a search was begun, and the other four boys were asked whereabouts they had left him. They all said that they did not know, and that the last time they were out the little boy did not go with them. Then the entire camp turned out to join in the search, as now they knew that the boy must be lost. After they had hunted a long time he could not be found, and they ceased to look for him; they thought he must have been killed and eaten by a wolf or a bear.

When he was first shut up in the log the little boy tried to get out, but could not do it, as the chunks of rotten wood were too large for him to move. He could not kick or push them out. Then he cried for help, but no one came. There he was for three days and three nights, crying loudly for help, and now and then falling asleep. But on the fourth night, while he was in the hollow log, he thought he heard some one coming. He listened, and was sure he heard the crying of a very old woman and the noise of the tramping of human feet. The crying and the tramping came nearer and nearer to the log where he was. At last the crying came very close to him, and then he heard a noise, as though some one sat down on the log. Now he heard the old woman cry in earnest, and now and then she would say: "Oh, how tired I am! how tired I am! and yet I may have come too late, for I do not hear my grandchild cry. He may be dead! he may be dead!" Then the old woman would cry in earnest again. At last he heard a rap on the log and his own name called: "Ha-yah-noo! Ha-yah-noo! are you still alive?" Ha-yah-noo, or Footprints under the Water (for this was the name of the little lost boy), answered the old woman, and said that he still lived. The old woman said, "Oh, how glad I am to find my grandchild still alive!" Then she asked Ha-yah-noo if he could not get out; but he said

<sup>1</sup> In Indian usage the mother is spoken of before the father.

he could not, for he had already tried. Then said the old woman, "I will try to get you out of this log." He heard her pull at the chunks of old wood ; but at last she said she could not get him out, as she was too old and tired. She had heard him crying three days before, and had journeyed three days and nights to come and help her grandchild out of his trouble. Now this old woman was an O-ne-ha-tah, or Porcupine. She lived in an old hemlock tree near the spot where the boy was shut up in the log.<sup>1</sup>

When Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah had said that she had to journey three days and nights, and now she could not help Ha-yah-noo out of the log, she was very sorry, and began to cry again. Finally she said that she had three children, who were very strong, and that she would get them to help her ; so she went after them. It was almost daylight when they came, and then Ha-yah-noo heard them pull out the chunks which stopped up the log. At last Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah said to Ha-yah-noo : "Come out now. My children have got the chunks out of the log. You can come out."

When Ha-yah-noo came out, he saw four wild animals around him. There was Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah and her three children, as she called them. They were Oo-kwa-e, the Bear ; Sken-no-doh, the Deer ; and Tah-you-ne, the Wolf. "Now," said O-ne-ha-tah, "I want one of you to take care of this boy, and love him as your own child. You all know that I have got to be very, very old. If I were younger I would take care of him myself."

Tah-you-ne, the Wolf, was the first one to speak. She said she could take care of the boy, as she lived on the same meat on which he fed. "No," said Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah, "you are too greedy. You would eat up the boy as soon as he is left with you alone." The Wolf was very angry. She showed her teeth, and snapped them at the boy, who was very much afraid, and wanted no such mother.

The next that spoke was Sken-no-doh, the Deer. She said that she and her husband would take care of the boy, as they lived on corn and other things which they knew the boy liked. Her husband would carry him on his back wherever they went. But Grandmother O-ne-ha-tah said : "No ; you can't take care of the boy, for you are always travelling, and never stay in one place. The boy cannot do the travelling that you do, for you run very fast and make very long journeys. The boy cannot stand it, and you have no home for him for the winter. Boys like this have homes." Then the Deer ran away, very happy, as though she were glad to be rid of the boy.

Then Oo-kwa-e, the Bear, said that she knew she could take care

<sup>1</sup> There may be an allusion to the name in this, for O-ne-tah (the Hemlock) means "Greens on a stick," and O-neh-tah (the Pine) means "Porcupines clinging to a stick."

of the boy, as she lived in a large stone house and had plenty to eat. She lived on meats and fishes, and all kinds of nuts and berries, and even wild honey, all of which the boy would like. She had a good warm bed for him to sleep on through the winter, and she was a loving mother to her children. She would rather die than see them abused. Then O-ne-ha-tah, or Porcupine (meaning "Full of quills"), said: "You are just the right one to take care of this boy. Take him and carry him home." So the Bear, like a loving mother, took the boy and brought him to her home. When they got there, Oo-kwa-e said to her two children, the Oo-tutch-ha, or Young Bears, "Don't play with him roughly, and he will be your kind little brother." Then she gave him some berries to eat, and they were all happy together.

The stone house was a cave in the rocks, but to the little boy it seemed to have rooms like any other house, and the little bears seemed to him like human children. They did not tease him, but lived in the most friendly way, and the old Oo-kwa-e was a very kind mother to the boy. It was now quite late in the fall, and the days became short and dark. Then Mother Oo-kwa-e said: "It is late and dark now. We had better go to bed." The nights were cold, but the bed was warm, and they slept until the spring.

One evening it thundered; for the bears do not wake up until the thunder is heard. It made such a noise that they thought the walls were coming down. Then the old Oo-kwa-e said: "Why, it's getting light. We had better get up." So they lived happily together for a very long time. She went out in the woods, going to and fro for food, and the children amused themselves at home.

Every now and then, through the summer, the Bear people would come in and say, "In such a place are plenty of berries." These would be strawberries, raspberries, or others, according to the season. Later they told of chestnuts and other kinds of nuts, of which they were fond. Then they would say, "Let us go and gather them." So the Mother Bear and the little Bears went, taking the little boy along with them; for they always expected a good time. The other bears knew nothing about the little boy. When they came near the spot, and he was seen, these would be frightened, and say: "There is a human being! Let us run! let us run!" So they would scamper off as fast as bears can, leaving their heaps of nuts or berries behind them. Then the old Oo-kwa-e would gather these up, she and her children, and take them home, which was a very easy way of getting plenty of food. Thus the boy became very useful to Mother Bear.

The boy lived with them thus for about three years, and the same things happened every year. In the third year Mother Bear said, "Some one is coming to kill us." Then all looked out, and saw a

man coming through the woods, with his bow and arrows in his hand, and his dog running all around looking for game. Then Mother Bear said, "I must see what I can do." So she took a forked stick, and pointed the open fork towards the man. It seemed to come near him, and appeared to him like a line of thick brush that he did not wish to break through. So he turned aside, and went another way, and they were safe that time.

Another day she again said, "Some one is coming towards us again, and we shall be killed." She put forth the forked stick again ; but the man did not mind it, and came straight towards her stone house. The stick itself split, and there was nothing in the way. Then she took a bag of feathers and threw these outside. They flew up and down, and around and around, and seemed like a flock of partridges. The dog ran after them, through the bushes and trees, supposing them to be birds, and so the second man went away.

The days went by, and the third time Mother Bear saw a man coming. This time she said, "Now we certainly are all going to die." Then she said to the boy : "Your father is coming now, and he is too good a hunter to be fooled. There is his dog, with his four eyes, and he, too, is one of the best of hunters." Now when a dog has light spots over each eye, the Indians say that he has four eyes. So the man came nearer, and she tried the forked stick, but it split ; and still the man and dog came on. Then she scattered the feathers, and they flew around as before ; but the hunter and dog paid no attention to them, and still they both came on. At last the dog reached the door and barked, and the man drew his bow to shoot at anything that came out.

When the Mother Oo-kwa-e saw the man standing there, she said, "Now, children, we must all take our bundles and go." So each of the Bears took a small bundle and laid it on its back, but there was no bundle at all for the boy. When all were ready, Mother Oo-kwa-e said, "I will go first, whatever may happen." So she opened the door, and as she went out the man shot, and she was killed. Then the oldest of the Oo-tutch-ha said, "I will go next ;" and as he went he also was killed.

The last little Bear was afraid, and said to the boy, "You go first." But the little boy was afraid, too, and said : "No ; you go first. I have no bundle." For all the Bears tried to get their bundles between them and the man. So the little Bear and the boy at last went out together ; but though the Bear tried to keep behind, the man shot at him first, and he was killed. As the hunter was about to shoot again, the boy called out : "Don't shoot me ! don't shoot me ! I am not a bear !" His father dropped his arrow, for he knew his voice at once, and said : "Why did you not call out be-

fore? Then I would not have killed the Oo-kwa-e and Oo-tutch-ha. I am very sorry for what I have done, for the Bears have been good to you." But the boy said: "You did not kill the Bears, though you thought so. You only shot the bundles. I saw them thrown down, and the spirits of the Bears run off from behind them." Still, the man was sorry he had shot at the Bears, for he wished to be kind to them, as they had been to his boy.

Then the father began to look at his boy more closely, to see how he had grown and how he had changed. Then he saw that long hairs were growing between his fingers, for, living so long with them, he had already begun to turn into a Bear. He was very glad when he took the boy back to his home, and his friends and relatives, and the whole town, rejoiced with him. All day they had a great feast, and all night they danced, and they were still dancing when I came away.

Bear stories of this kind seem to have been favorites among the Iroquois, and Mrs. Erminnie A. Smith relates three of them in her collection. Of such tales in general, she remarks that, "In nearly all of these, wherever the bear is introduced he serves as a pattern of benevolence, while many other animals, such as the porcupine, are always presented as noxious." Yet in the one most resembling the one just given, "The Hare and his Step-son," the man shuts the child in a porcupine's hole, and the porcupine rescues him, calling on the animals to feed him. The fox and the wolf, however, do not bear a good character, and snakes are invariably agents of evil.

The old story of "Valentine and Orson" has so delighted white children that it is no matter of surprise that Indians have enjoyed their own stories of lost boys nursed by bears. Perhaps the tendency of these animals to assume an erect position may have suggested to them a near kinship to the human race. To complete the present paper, a sketch may be given of the three tales related by Mrs. Smith. It may be premised that several incidents of the present story are found in all three of these, but not in each other.

The first she had from the Senecas of the Cattaraugus reservation. In this a young boy is missed from the hunting-camp, and all search proves vain. His friends think him dead, and go home. A bear takes pity on him, but changes herself into the appearance of a woman, and takes him home to live with her cubs, in her hollow tree. When the time for the return of the hunters arrives, she tells him of her device, and he is restored to his friends. He never kills a bear.

The next is quite different. A hunter is angry with his wife for secreting food, and makes her eat until she dies from its effects. Her new-born child he throws into a hollow tree, but takes good

care of his older boy. For him he makes a bow and arrows, and after a long time saw little footprints around his lodge. He made a second small bow and arrows, and soon found they were being used. He now saw a little child come from the hollow tree to play with his boy, and knew it was the infant he had thrown away. He had been cared for by a bear, whom the hunter treated kindly. The two boys afterwards went far westward to slay the great and hurtful beasts.

The third was told in Canada, and is a variant of the one I have related. A man hated his step-son, and persuaded him to enter a porcupine's hole. This he stopped up, leaving the boy a prisoner. He cried himself asleep, and when he woke up he was in a room with an old woman, who was the porcupine. He could not eat her food, and so she called the animals to a council to tell how he might be fed. "The fox said: 'I live on geese and fowls. I'll take him, but still he can't eat raw food.' The council decided that it was useless for him to assume the charge." All offered in turn, without effect. At last the bear spoke, and the child was left with her, all agreeing to help her gather nuts. After living several years in a hollow tree, they saw a man and dog coming. The tree was cut down, and the bear and her two cubs were killed. The hunter looked for another cub, but found the boy instead. He made noises just like the cubs. The hunter took him home, tamed and taught him, and gave him his daughter for a wife. Her mother, however, was angry because the boy brought home no bear's meat. At last he killed a bear, but it brought him no good luck. On his way home he fell on a sharp stick, which killed him at once.

In this tale the words of the fox are much like those of the wolf in the other. Some of the incidents differ much, and yet the common origin of the two is readily seen.

In New York the Iroquois stories are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. They maintain their hold among the older people, but the younger ones find those which are quite as good among the literature of the whites. It is easy to see how our stories are adopted, and told in an Indian way; and Mrs. Smith has given some good examples. The Onondagas are not behind in following the spirit of the times.

#### THE FOX AND THE BEAR.

While the fox is the type of all mischief with the Onondagas, they seem to have few stories about him. One of these has been related by Mrs. E. A. Smith, and has modern features. In this she makes one story depend upon another, while they were related to me as distinct tales. I inquired particularly about this, and was assured that there was no connection. These are the tales I received:—

I. The fox saw some men carrying home a wagon load of fish, and



contrived to get upon it. At his leisure he quietly threw off one, and then another, until he was satisfied, and slipped off himself to eat them. As he was feasting on the last the bear came along, and asked about his good luck. The fox said he would show him how to get a good supply if he would go with him the next night. So they went on the ice till they found a hole, and the fox told the bear to put his tail in this that the fish might bite.

"Now," said the fox, "you are very strong, and must wait until a good many take hold of your tail." So the bear sat very still for a time; but when he shifted a little his tail was slightly pulled, for it was freezing to the ice. "Don't pull yet," said the fox; "more will take hold, and you will have a big haul. You are very strong, and must catch all you can." So the bear waited, and the next time he moved it pulled a little harder. "Not yet," said the fox; "more will take hold." But when the morning was come the fox ran to a house on the bank, and the dogs began to bark furiously. This frightened the bear, so that he pulled with all his might, and left his tail frozen to the ice. Then I came away; but the bears have had short tails ever since.

II. For some reason the bear and the fox fell out, and were going to fight a duel. The fox chose a cat and a lame dog for his seconds, while the bear had the wolf and the pig, but the wolf kept away. The bear and the pig came to the place first, both of them a little afraid, and the bear said he would climb a tree and watch for the rest. The pig hid under the leaves by a log. The bear said: "I see the fox coming. He has two men with him, and one is picking up stones to throw at us!" For when the dog limped, it seemed to the bear he was picking up stones. The cat, too, raised its tail and waved it around. When it did this the bear said: "Now I see the other man. He has a big club, and oh! how he waves it around! Lie down there! Keep still! They'll give it to us if they find us!" Then he looked again. "Yes, they're coming! they're coming! Keep still! keep still!"

So the cat came under the tree, and upon the log. The pig wanted to see, and tried to peep out; but when the cat saw the leaves moving she thought it was a mouse. Down she sprang in an instant, and had the pig by the nose. "Ke-week! ke-we-e-k!" he squealed and squealed, which scared the cat in turn, and she ran for the tree. The bear was so frightened when he saw her coming, that he let go his hold, fell from the tree, and was killed. Then I came away.

In this story the narrator imitated the squealing of the pig, etc., to the intense delight of the Indian children. It was thus a favorite tale.

*W. M. Beauchamp.*